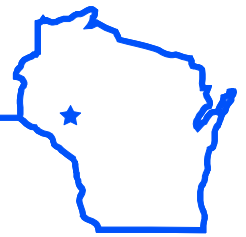




## **MENOMONIE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Eric M. Atkinson, Police Chief**



**Contact:**

Brenna Long, Crime Prevention Specialist  
715-231-8504  
longb@menomonie-wi.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Menomonie Police Department responds to “Swatting” incident**

Menomonie— Yesterday, Menomonie police officers responded to a “swatting” incident in the areas of 4<sup>th</sup> Street West and 21<sup>st</sup> Street North. The response was initiated when a subject dialed the non-emergency line and stated that their father was shooting a shotgun. During this call, the subject claimed to be a specific Menomonie resident and gave the resident’s former address to the dispatcher. Officers responded and set up a perimeter around the house.

Investigation in to this matter showed that no such incident had occurred and the subject who made the call was not the Menomonie resident that they had claimed to be. Contact was made with the resident, who advised that while using the anonymous Internet chatroom “Tinychat”, she was warned by another chatroom user that she would be “doxed” (finding identifying information about a person through the Internet), which led to the swatting incident.

“Swatting” is falsely reporting an emergency to law enforcement such as a shooting, murder, or bomb threat, requiring a law enforcement/SWAT team response to the victim’s home under false pretenses. Due to the increased anonymity of technology, these incidents have been on the rise nationally since 2013. Many times, victims of swatting become unintentional targets while participating in online games or chatrooms if another user is able to obtain the victim’s personal information such as a residential address or their computer’s IP address.

These incidents are to be taken seriously as they deplete a tremendous amount of valuable resources and can place first responders and citizens in harm’s way. Please take this opportunity to communicate to your children, friends and family surrounding the dangers of giving out personal information online.

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